

Message Text

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USEEC, CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:ELAB, SHUM, SF, US

SUBJECT: LABOR REFORM: VISIT OF NIC WIEHAHN

REF: JOHANNESBURG 0917

SUMMARY:

1. NIC WIEHAHN VISITED DEPARTMENT (AF) AND AFL-CIO DURING
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WASHINGTON STOP. VISIT TO DEPARTMENT FOLLOWED THE SCRIPT
OF OTHER WIEHAHN PRESENTATIONS REPORTED EARLIER BY JOHANNES-
BURG. VISIT TO AFL-CIO WENT BADLY AS AMBASSADOR SOLE,
WHO ACCOMPANIED WIEHAHN, USED THE MEETING AS A POLITICAL
FORUM. END OF SUMMARY.

2. CHAIRMAN OF SOUTH AFRICAN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY IN LABOR

LEGISLATION NIC WIEHAHN, ACCOMPANIED BY SA EMBOFF, CALLED ON AF DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY WALKER DURING RECENT TRIP TO US. WIEHAHN'S PRESENTATION FOLLOWED GENERAL LINES REPORTED FROM LABOR ATTACHE MEETINGS WITH WIEHAHN. HE SAID NO INTERIM REPORT WOULD BE ISSUED IN VIEW OF THE MASS OF TESTIMONY TO BE DIGESTED. FULL REPORT IS EXPECTED TO BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT NEARER THE END OF THE YEAR. WIEHAHN INDICATED THE GIST OF THE REPORT WOULD BE TO RECOMMEND MOVEMENT TOWARD A UNITARY INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS STRUCTURE

LIKELY TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR BLACK TRADE UNIONS. UNDER QUESTIONING HE CONCEDED THIS COULD BE SEEN AS WEAKENING TRADE UNIONS, BUT THAT THIS WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS WHERE THE UNIONS SHOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE. ALSO UNDER QUESTIONING, WIEHAHN SAID BANNINGS SHOULD NOT BE INVOKED AS A RESULT OF TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES AND HE HAD SO STATED TO KRUGER.

3. WIEHAHN'S VISIT TO THE AFL-CIO WAS DESCRIBED BY AFL-CIO AS HAVING GONE "VERY BADLY." AMBASSADOR SOLE ACCOMPANIED WIEHAHN AND, ACCORDING TO THE AFL-CIO, THE AMBASSADOR USED THE OCCASION TO CONTINUALLY COMPLAIN ABOUT THE TREATMENT BEING ACCORDED SOUTH AFRICA BY THE MEDIA, THE ABANDONMENT TO THE COMMUNISTS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA, ETC., SO MUCH SO THAT NO REAL DISCUSSION OF WIEHAHN'S STUDY TOOK PLACE. THE AFL-CIO DID MANAGE TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASK WIEHAHN ABOUT THE GROBELAAR REVELATIONS REPORTED REFTEL. WIEHAHN SAID THAT SUCH A THING COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED, AND ANY SUCH STATEMENT WAS "COMPLETELY UNTRUE." WIEHAHN TELEPHONED ERNIE LEE, AFL-CIO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, LATER IN THE DAY AND APOLOGIZED FOR SOLE'S CONDUCT. RATHER THAN MOLLIFYING THE AFL-CIO, THE CALL, COUPLED WITH THE GROBELAAR PROTESTATIONS, HAS BROUGHT INTO QUESTION IN THE AFL-CIO VIEW WIEHAHN'S CREDIBILITY AS EITHER AN INFLUENCE WITH OR SPOKESMAN FOR THE SAG.

4. AFL-CIO HAS RECEIVED A REQUEST FROM GROBELAAR FOR A MEETING WITH GEORGE MEANY OF GROBELAAR AND LUCY MVUBELO THE FIRST WEEK IN JULY. GROBELAAR AND MVUBELO ARE REPORTEDLY TO PARTICIPATE IN A CONFERENCE IN TEXAS IN LATE JUNE/EARLY JULY. OTHER DETAILS ARE UNKNOWN AT PRESENT. MARK ANDERSON OF THE AFL-CIO SAYS MEANY HAS AGREED TO THE MEETING. ANDERSON ANTICIPATES THAT BOTH WILL RECEIVE A COOL RECEPTION. VANCE

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